

### **NGB's declare Open Season for club bashing**

As Government looks at ways of reducing Departmental expenditure there are increasing signs that UKSport and Sport England will be on the receiving end of some severe cuts. Already the changing political situation has resulted in cutting this year's England Athletics' grant aid by £1.3million. To make up this shortfall EA have announced plans to increase income by forcing club athletes of all ages to be affiliated. The consequences of not registering are significant. The true extent of the potential problems has been summarised by one member club who have sent a stern letter of warning to England Athletics. We reproduce it here with their permission.

[You can read the letter by clicking here.](#)

**The P10 power game.** UKA's control over all parts of our sport has been extended since their insistence that every event shall require a Permit issued by them. Events not permitted by them will not have their results listed on P10 nor recognised for ranking purposes. Hitherto low key events have allowed athletes to compete who are not affiliated to EA. The new proposals are that the performances of non affiliated athletes will not be recognised. Furthermore events which do not have the necessary number of licensed officials will also fall foul of UKA as P10 has been instructed not to accept results from meetings with too few graded officials.

We have an example of one meeting held in June with electronic timing which had too few graded officials (although the starter was graded). P10 refused to accept the results and as a result some pb's were not recorded and one Italian junior failed to have his performance registered which would have qualified him for the Italian junior squad. Following this the club concerned has cancelled a similar meeting scheduled for the end of July as it cannot get sufficient qualified officials.

**Commentary.** By following UKA edicts P10 is moving down a very tricky path. On the one hand it will not publish results from UK events if there are insufficient officials but on the other hand it publishes results from abroad where often there are no graded officials. Indeed in the USA many meetings do not have timekeepers or other officials and yet their results are accepted.

With regard to permits we have an example where a whole section of our sport has turned its back on UKA. The Association of Running Clubs (ARC) which was established in 2007 issues its own permits for extra stadia events. Its membership has grown year on year. Currently it issues around 500 race permits per year. P10 refuses to record the results of these races but ARC has overcome this potential problem by having them listed on an alternative website – ***topsinathletics.com***-. This site also lists track and field results which are now being withheld from P10. If this trend continues ***topsinathletics*** will be the first port of call for clubs.

And while on the subject of P10 limitations we note that their list of coaches provided alongside named athletes is far from accurate. By printing the names of unlicensed coaches they are lending them credence, which could have damaging consequences.

**Summary.** The sport changed in 1997 when it moved from being owned by members and run by members for the benefit of members. By removing the ability of clubs to vote on key issues and imposing a "Top Down" management bureaucracy the then Government changed athletics for ever. The staffing levels have exploded over the intervening years, as too have the operating costs. Once

again we are at a period when even more changes are being imposed and increasing pressures are being put on grass roots clubs and volunteers.

***ABAC says "enough is enough". It is time to roll back the clock to a period when governance was smaller and the imposition on clubs far less. Give us back our sport***

July 2015